

Rush of Tobacco Quitters Expected for Great American Smokeout 2010

Maryland Tobacco Quitline Serves Thousands of Marylanders (1-800-784-8669)

Department of Health & Mental Hygiene News Release

Baltimore, MD (November 16, 2010) - The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) expects a surge in the number of calls to **The Maryland Tobacco Quitline** this Thursday during **The Great American Smokeout**. Over 12,000 Marylanders called the Maryland Tobacco Quitline last year, a critical part of anti-smoking efforts that's helped Maryland achieve the sixth lowest prevalence of cigarette smoking in the nation according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). "We expect a rush of Maryland smokers will be calling the Quitline this week to get the help they need to go smoke-free for good," said John M. Colmers, DHMH Secretary. "For 12 years Maryland has reduced smoking at twice the national rate but we're not satisfied with being number six. If every Maryland smoker who is ready to stop calls the Quitline, we could lead the nation. It's free and it's helped thousands of Marylanders successfully quit smoking and improve their health."

Each year since 1977, the American Cancer Society has sponsored the Great American Smokeout on the third Thursday of November to help smokers quit cigarettes for at least one day, in hopes they will quit forever. The 2010 Great American Smokeout will be Thursday, November 18. The toll-free Maryland Tobacco Quitline, **1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669)** is a professional, telephone-based tobacco cessation service provided at no charge to Marylanders who want to quit using tobacco.

"We know that quitting a nicotine addiction can be very difficult for anyone," said Frances Phillips, DHMH Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services. "Those who have called the Maryland Tobacco Quitline for help have had seven times the success in quitting their tobacco habit and staying smoke-free compared to those smokers who go it alone. It doesn't matter how long you've been a smoker, the health benefits from quitting start right away."

Maryland Tobacco Quitline Facts (Fiscal Year 2010):

- 98% of callers were satisfied with Quitline services.
- Latest evaluation results founds that the quit rates of The Maryland Tobacco Quitline were seven times the quit rates of non-assisted quits.
- 12,617 Marylanders called the Quitline.
- Registrants called from all Maryland counties and Baltimore City. The greatest numbers of callers were from highly populated areas of the state: Baltimore City and Baltimore County, Prince Georges, Montgomery, Howard, and Anne Arundel Counties
- 4,383 shipments of free nicotine replacement patches and gum were sent to residents.
- 58.2% Females and 41.8% Males called the Quitline.
- 49.3% White and 45.0% African American called the Quitline.
- 11.5% increase in pregnant or breast-feeding mothers since FY09.
- Friends and Family (34.2%) and Health Professional (17.5%) were reported as the most popular way that people heard about the Quitline.

The Quitline provides free, personalized assistance by professional Quit Coaches. Callers enrolled in the Quitline's program work with a quit coach throughout the quitting process. During a series of up to four telephone sessions, the coaches assist callers in developing and working through a quit plan based on their individual needs.

The Maryland Tobacco Quitline's hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 3 a.m. seven days a week. For more information about the Quitline, please visit www.smokingstopshere.com.